

## SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

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Tuesday, October 21, 2014, 6:00 p.m, Old Schoolhouse Common

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Present: Selectboard members John Warshow, Chris Martin, and Andy Perchlik; Town Clerk Bobbi Brimblecombe; Jenny Warshow, Jim Brimblecombe, and Ed Jalbert (Stranahan Stewardship Committee); Road Foreman Dan Tetreault; Visitors Rita Copeland (Twin Valley Seniors); Nicki Ariste (Vermont State Housing Authority); Bob Popp; Will Walters (Hardwick Gazette)

At 6:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Martin

**Twin Valley Seniors:** Rita Copeland updated the Board about the Seniors' activities since they moved to their new location, and she asked for their support in reaching the elderly. Recent activities included a health fair, balance testing and exercise classes. They served over 10,000 meals in the last year, including meals at the center and Meals and Wheels. They are reaching more people in Calais and Woodbury since they moved.

**Cats:** Nichole Ariste, property manager for the Vermont State Housing Authority, spoke to the Board about problems with cats at the Hollister Hill Apartments. There are many cats at the property that are not being claimed or fed by anyone. They are becoming a nuisance. They were likely pets at one time because they are friendly. Several of the cats on the property are pregnant. The Housing Authority allows cats but they are supposed to be spayed or neutered. The Town would be charged \$60 each if they were brought to the Humane Society. If they are not taken care of, they will likely not survive the winter. The Board suggested putting something on the Front Porch Forum.

Bobbi updated the Board on another cat issue; she received a call over the weekend about abandoned cats on Route 2. They have since been taken by a neighbor to the Humane Society.

**Stranahan Town Forest:** Ed Jalbert notified the Board that the Stranahan Committee met last night and discussed logging. Committee member Diana Batzel could not attend but sent Ed an email stating that since they have spent so much time on the job, they should go forward. Jenny Warshow feels that they should take the conservative approach and not put any equipment into any wetland. Ed, John Domey and Jim Brimblecombe feel that they should stay out of the wetlands except where they have to do a crossing, and it would be a winter crossing. If there are any trees marked in the wetlands, they would cable them out, and cut up to the edges of the wetlands. Ed feels that 90% of the trees that are marked are high-risk trees that are going to fall anyway. He feels that the unmarked, mesic wetlands will have to be dealt with in the next management plan. John asked if the new wet areas are marked in a way that would be obvious in the snow. Jenny pointed out that the job is only going to net \$4,000, before subtracting whatever trees can't be collected from the wetlands. Andy asked if there are other values to doing logging, other than the money. Ed suggested that good management practices say to salvage the trees before they fall, and logging will create a mixed-age stand, but it would happen eventually anyway. Bob Popp gave his personal opinion that he has no problem with logging on the parcel. He thinks that is a valid use of the property, but it should not come at the expense of the ecological value of the parcel. He feels that there is a potential for damage to the wetlands. He recommends a 100' no cut area, and then 200' single tree selection, but it's not a

mandate, but a recommendation. Ed noted that this recommendation is not followed on all Land Trust properties. Ed stated that the Land Trust said it's up to the Selectboard whether or not the unmapped areas are treated as wetlands. Andy feels that the original purpose of the property was to keep it a mixed-use property. He feels that we should try to log the property if we can do it responsibly without damaging the wetlands. Chris thinks we should log but cable out the trees that are in the wet areas. John feels that the wetlands should all be treated the same. Ed indicated that the job would have to be re-marked if the wet areas are to be treated like the mapped wetlands. Andy asked whether some wetlands are more significant than others. Bob said he believes that some are more significant.

Andy suggested that we go forward with the sale but say that no trees will be taken out of the wetlands, and tell the loggers that we would prefer to leave a buffer, and put the conditions in the contract about the snow, cold weather, etc. Ed suggested that the document needs to be more specific, rather than leaving it up to the logger.

Ed reported that there will be an invasives removal day on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and that will help mitigate the chance of spreading invasive species.

Ed recommends changes to the procedure that was used during the last logging job: sending a letter to the abutters; having a forester oversee the sale; avoiding historical structures such as stone walls and foundations; and pressure washing the skidder before the job.

Andy suggested that the Committee write up the sale documents and bring them to the Selectboard for approval. He isn't convinced that there will be great ecological damage from the logging, and there is a sentiment that there should be some logging and some income from the property. Bobbi stated that there are people who are having a serious problem paying their taxes, and we owe it to them to try to make some income from the property. Ed will do a draft contract before the next Selectboard meeting. Chris stated that the contract should be done as the sale was originally planned. Ed will have it for the next Selectboard meeting.

**Sidewalk Snow Removal:** The Town did not receive any bids for sidewalk snow removal. The Board decided not to re-advertise.

**Personnel:** Dan Tetreault and the Selectboard discussed the Road Foreman job description and what the best plan would be for Dan's transition to retirement.

**Old Schoolhouse Common:** Ellen Blachly asked the Selectboard to do something about the people smoking on the back porch. The Board will put up signs.

**Route 2:** Bess Powers requested the Town look into No Parking signs on Route 2. The Selectboard asked Bobbi to write a letter to the Traffic Bureau, requesting the signs.

**Illegal Dumping:** The Town received a complaint regarding construction debris and garbage being dumped on the railroad bed. The Agency of Natural Resources is investigating.

**Martin Covered Bridge:** The Selectboard authorized Chris to sign the Baseline Documentation Report from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.

**Budgets:** Bobbi notified the Selectboard that the health insurance premiums will increase between 7% and 8%. The budget will actually be lower this year, because the Town had to put in additional money the first year into a health reimbursement account.

**Expenses, Permits & Payroll:** Selectboard members read and signed reports for General Expenses and Payroll.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Town Clerk

The foregoing is a true copy of the Minutes of the October 21, 2014 Selectboard Meeting.  
A True Record. Attest, \_\_\_\_\_, Town Clerk

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